

Soundings®

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR THE MILITARY COMMUNITY

BUILDING BETTER BODIES

A new health and fitness program at **Naval Air Station Oceana** could change the way America fights the battle of the bulge. — B1



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Soundings photo by Harry Gerwien

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NAVY AND MARINE CORPS NEWS

Battling the bulge

Oceana program may become the national model in the fight against obesity

BY DEVON HUBBARD SORLIE
Soundings Staff

Sailors and Marines on deployment are putting their lives in harm's way as they fight the global war on terrorism. But far too many sailors and Marines here at home are in just as much danger. While their brethren are fighting Iraqi insurgents, those at home are fighting a silent killer — the battle of the bulge.

Obesity. It's considered a national epidemic with nearly 65 percent of all Americans considered to be overweight or obese. In fact, physical inactivity and poor diet are now the leading contributors to death in the United States, surpassing the use of tobacco. Obesity is affecting recruits joining the Navy and how

long they stay in the service.

Of the recruits who exceed the height-to-weight standards when they join the Navy and Marine Corps, 80 percent never finish their first term of enlistment, which affects training and preparedness within the military.

Approximately 42 percent of all medical separations of sailors are due to a musculoskeletal disorder (usually knee or back injuries) that costs both the Navy and the taxpayers millions in disability and training costs. Many of those come from the service members being overweight.

After the Department of the Defense's 2002 health survey revealed just how fat service members had become, Navy officials decided it was time to shake things up.

Please see Fitness, page B2



Soundings photo by Harry Gerwien

Keeping fit is more than just cardiovascular exercise. Strength and flexibility programs promote strong bones and better balance. The Oceana/Dam Neck IN MOTION campaign includes active duty, family and retirees like Bob Pullinger, left, Bob Denney, and Jim Serpente, right, who get together several times a week to practice Pilates, a core strength training exercise, at the NAS Oceana recreation complex.

Patrol coastal crewmembers remember fallen sailors

BY DEVON HUBBARD SORLIE
Soundings Staff

For most of us, the names of two sailors and a Coast Guardsman from USS Firebolt who were killed last month while preparing to board a boat off the coast of Iraq have been replaced by dozens of other Marines and soldiers who have died in recent days.

But for crewmembers aboard USS Typhoon and USS Sirocco, a pair of patrol coastal ships based out of Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, the names of Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Petty Officer Michael Pernaselli, Signalman 2nd Class Petty Officer Christopher Watts and Coast Guard Controlman 3rd Class Nathan Bruckenthal remain sharp in their minds.

The Typhoon and Sirocco are replacing USS Chinook and USS Firebolt, two other Navy PCs based out of Little Creek that have been stationed in Iraq for 18 months. Crews on the ships will be swapped out every six months for the Navy, and every three months for the eight-man Coast Guard detachment.

Typhoon and Sirocco crewmembers will be doing the same mission as those on USS Firebolt and Chinook — patrolling the waters, protecting the oil terminals and other ships from attacks, conducting boardings and interdictions when necessary.

"That mission was successful," Lt. Michael Nash, commanding officer of USS Sirocco, said about the Firebolt deaths. "They protected the oil field, which is crucial in the rebuilding of Iraq."

The three who died saved many others who were working on that oil platform that day, Nash pointed out.

"The loss of life could have been so much greater," he said.

Please see PCs, page B7



Soundings photo by Harry Gerwien

Family members wave goodbye to crewmembers of the patrol coastal ships USS Typhoon and USS Sirocco. The PCs left April 30 to relieve USS Firebolt and USS Chinook. A boat carrying crewmembers from USS Firebolt was attacked recently, killing two sailors, one Coast Guard member and wounding two sailors.

“Those guys are a role model for physical fitness,” Settles pointed out. “They’ve just got to be out doing something.”



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